

REMARKS

This is responsive to the Office Action dated November 6, 2006. Applicant has not amended any claims. Claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-13, 15-20, and 22-37 are pending.

Claim Rejections – Declaration Under 37 C.F.R. 1.131

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 17, 19, 20, 33, 35 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Stein et al. (US 2004/0230246). Claims 4, 15, 16, 22, 31 and 32 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stein et al., and claims 5-9, 11-12, 18, 23-28, 34 and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stein et al. in view of Lebel et al. (US 6,648,821). Claims 13 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stein et al. in view of Stanton et al. (US 6,249,703).

With this Response, Applicant has submitted a signed copy of a Declaration Under 37 C.F.R. 1.131 and accompanying Exhibits A-E. The Declaration and Exhibits establish that Applicant conceived and reduced to practice the inventions set forth in claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-13, 15-20, and 22-37 of this application prior to May 15, 2003. Accordingly, in view of the Declaration and Exhibits, Applicant respectfully requests that any rejections of claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-13, 15-20, and 22-37 on the basis of Stein et al., which bears a filing date of May 15, 2003 should now be withdrawn. Furthermore, Applicant notes that Lebel et al. and Stanton et al. fail to teach or suggest each and every element of Applicant's claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-13, 15-20, and 22-37.

Applicant does not acquiesce to or admit in any way to the propriety of the rejections advanced by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 with respect to claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-13, 15-20, and 22-37. On the contrary, such claims recite a number of features that are neither disclosed nor suggested by the applied references. The Declaration should render moot such rejections, however, and expedite allowance of the pending claims.

CONCLUSION

All claims in this application are in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and prompt allowance of all pending claims. Please charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to deposit account number 50-1778. The Examiner is invited to telephone the below-signed attorney to discuss this application.

Date:

February 6, 2007

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